

Message Text

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PAGE 01 JOHANN 02417 120735Z

ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08

FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 TRSE-00 XMB-02

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FM AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6674

INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

US MISSION USUN NEW YORK 284

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN POUCH

AMCONSUL DURBAN POUCH

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE JOHANNESBURG 2417

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, EGEN, PINT, SF

SUBJECT: SURVEY OF BLACK UNEMPLOYMENT IN INDUSTRIAL TRIANGLE

REF: JOHANNESBURG 1730

1. SUMMARY: ALMOST 200,000 ADULT BLACKS (18.8 PERCENT OF THE WORK FIGURE) ARE UNEMPLOYED IN THE INDUSTRIAL TRIANGLE ACCORDING TO AN INDEPENDENT SCIENTIFIC SURVEY. COMBINED WITH STUDENT UNREST IN THE TOWNSHIPS, THE HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT RATE REPRESENTS A SERIOUS THREAT TO SOCIAL STABILITY IN JOHANNESBURG, REEF, PRETORIA AREA. END SUMMARY.

2. ACCORDING TO AN INDEPENDENT SCIENTIFIC SURVEY CONDUCTED BY MARKET RESEARCH AFRICA, 199,280 ADULTS OR ALMOST ONE FIFTH (18.8 PERCENT) OF THE NORMALLY ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE BLACK LABOR FORCE IN JOHANNESBURG, ON THE REEF AND IN PRETORIA IS OUT OF WORK AND ACTIVELY SEEKING WORK. THIS COMPARES WITH 30,000 (2 PERCENT) UNEMPLOYED WHITES, ASIANS AND COLOREDS IN THE COUNTRY AS A WHOLE. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 02 JOHANN 02417 120735Z

(ESTIMATES OF TOTAL UNEMPLOYMENT THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY REMAIN AT 1.6 MILLION OR 14.5 PERCENT OF THE COUNTRY'S WORK FORCE.)

3. THE AREA OF THE HIGHEST RATE OF BLACK UNEMPLOYMENT IS THE EAST RAND (21.6 PERCENT). PRETORIA HAS 14.1 PERCENT AND THE WEST RAND IS BEST OFF WITH 11.8 PERCENT. THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE AMONG 16-24 YEAR OLD BLACKS IN THE INDUSTRIAL TRIANGLE IS 22.5

PERCENT; AMONG THOSE BETWEEN 25 AND 34, IT IS 20.1 PERCENT;
BETWEEN 35 AND 49 YESRS, 18.1 PERCENT AND FOR THOSE OVER 50, IT
IS 10.4 PERCENT.

4. THE JOHANNESBURG, REEF, PRETORIA INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX IS THE AREA
MOST AFFECTED BY THE CURRENT RECESSION. UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE
WESTERN CAPE AND THE PORT WLIZABETH AREA IS LESS SEVERE DUE TO THE
SCARCITY OF BLACK LABOR. WHILE IT IS BELIEVED TO BE ACUTE
IN THE SERVICE ORIENTED DURBAN COMPLEX, PRECISE DATA ARE NOT
AVAILABLE.

5. THE RESPONSE TO THE SUBJECT SURVEY HAS BEEN VARIED. THE
SA DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS ANNOUNCED, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT BE-
GINNING IN OCTOBER IT WILL PUBLICIZE FOR THE FIRST TIME
MONTHLY FIGURES ON BLACK UNEMPLOYMENT TO BE BASED ON A COUNTRY
WIDE SURVEY AUTHORIZED DURING THE LAST SESSION OF PARLIAMENT.
DR. NATHATO MOTLANA, CHAIRMAN OF THE SOWETO COMMITTEE OF TEN,
URGED THAT ALL INTERESTED PARTIES, SUCH AS THE URBAN FOUNDATION AND
THE JOHANNESBURG CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, SHOULD JOIN FORCES WITH
THE COMMITTEE OF TEN IN ALLEVIATING THE EFFECTS OF THE CURRENT
HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT LEVEL THROUGH SELF-HELP RELIEF WORK AND
FEEDING PROGRAMS.

6. COMMENT: BANKING AND BUSINESS SOURCES ARE PREDICTING AN END TO THE
CURRENT ECONOMIC DOWN SWING BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR. A
HESITANT REVIVAL IS EXPECTED TO GATHER MOMENTUM NEXT YEAR. THE
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PAGE 03 JOHANN 02417 120735Z

MOOT QUESTION REMAINS, HOWEVER, WHETHER THE COMBINATION OF HIGH
UNEMPLOYMENT AND STUDENT UNREST IN THE INDUSTRIAL TRIANGLE WILL
CREATE A SERIOUS INSTABILITY BEFORE RECOVERY BEGINS.
JOHNSON

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